BUSY WORKERS; HOW THEY LIVE

Working and Living Conditions Among Northern and Southern Textile Operatives Compared.

VIEWS IN OFFICIAL REPORT

Conditions of Factory Operatives in South Better Than Those in North.

BY W. J. LAUCK.

During the years 1907-1908, the United States Bureau of Labor made a general study of the cotton mill operatives in the Northern and Southern States. About 200 mills were visited, employing 51,000 wage-earners. The results of this investigation were embodied in one of the volumes of the report on Women and Child Labor in the United States. In order to verify the conclusions reached, as well as to obtain a better comparison of conditions in northern and southern textile manufacturing centres, an intensive and supplementary study of selected families in both sections was then undertaken. In New England it was limited to the city of Fall River, and in the South to Atlanta, Georgia, and Greensboro and Burlington, North Carolina. Fourteen typical families were investigated in Fall River and twenty-one in the Southern localities. In order to present the economic condition of the cotton mill operatives in a fair way, it was necessary to include some families which in the judgment of the investigators and of the respective communities had attained a fair standard of life. It was also found desirable, in order that the results might accurately represent conditions, to study some families of the lowest standards obtaining among cotton mill operatives.

The Cotton Mill People.

In New England the cotton mill workers were found to be largely made up of representatives of almost all races of Southern and Eastern Europe. Only a few native Americans were employed, chiefly in the supervisory and skilled positions.

As regards the South, the report makes the following comment relative to the origin and characteristics of the mill people.

"There is perhaps no industrial class of people in America that is marked off from the rest of society by such definite lines as are the cotton-mill workers of the Southern States. They were originally, for the most part, small landowners, tenant farmers or mountain people. They are conservative with the conservatism natural to people from such surroundings. The change from the agricultural to the industrial life has made them less isolated as individuals, but scarcely less so as a class. There has been little mingling with other people. The manufacturers have gone to the farms or into the hills and mountains, brought families together and made them into communities. These communities, whether in the remote country districts of North Carolina or within the limits of a city like Atlanta, Ga., remain almost as isolated from the rest of the world as the individual families were on the scattered farms from which they came.

"There are several reasons for this. In the first place they are looked down upon by the other people of the South. There is no attempt to make them a part of the community into which they have recently come. The old residents know little about them and care less. In the second place, certain conditions of the new industrial life foster this isolation. The whole family—men, women and children—are engaged in the same industry in which every other family in their community is engaged. They have their own churches and their own schools, in many cases furnished by the mill owners. They live, with few exceptions, in houses owned by the mill company. They buy their provisions, in many cases, from the company store. The cotton mill is the centre of their lives. Their present and their future are bounded by it. In less isolated industrial communities there is always the prospect of working into some other and higher industrial group. The vision of the Southern cotton operative, however, is so limited by his surroundings that this possibility rarely occurs to him. In other industries the father may feel that he can never hope for anything more for himself, but he can at least plan and struggle for a better life for his children. Here the mill demands the children as well as the father.

No Normal Families North or South.

The type of family usually described as normal—father, with wife and children dependent upon him for support—was not found among the typical cotton mill families of the North or South. Large families are the rule. The average number of members for the twenty-one selected families in the South was 8.5 persons, boarders being included. In Fall River the average size of the fourteen families studied was 6.8 persons. The average number of wage-earners per family in the Southern localities was 3.6, and in Fall River, 3.2. In addition to the contributions received from the earnings of children in the mills, a large proportion of the families in both sections were forced to supplement their incomes, during a part of the year at least, by taking boarders or lodgers.

Kind of Food Consumed.

A large part of the diet of Southern families was found to consist of cornbread, biscuit, fat pork and coffee. No tea was used. The usual menus of the families are of interest. For dinner such combinations as pork and peas, pork and greens, and pork and cabbage appear. This means that a small piece of salt pork for the purpose of seasoning has been cooked with the vegetable. Frequently the meat is not eaten at all. In any case, it does not mean a separate dish of meat. Sweet potatoes are used much more frequently than Irish potatoes.

Supper with most of the families is a light meal. Frequently it is nothing more than what is left from dinner, warmed over or eaten cold. In many other cases it is bread, meat (fat back) and coffee.

Breakfast consists of coffee, bread, syrup and pork in some form.

No yeast bread is used. Cornbread or biscuit are used by all the families. Beer is used very infrequently.

Among the Southern and Eastern European mill workers in Fall River the standards were much lower. Bread, coffee and meat form the principal articles of their diet. A tablecloth is rarely seen. Only a few dishes are provided. The members of the household may all eat at one time or they may eat one at a time as may suit their convenience. The boarding group system of living is the prevailing type, and an independent form of family life exists only to a very small extent. The apartments are badly crowded. As many rooms as possible are used for sleeping purposes.

Cost of Food.

About two-thirds of the Southern mill families raised some garden stuff, had poultry or kept a cow, from which they derived butter or milk. These facts were taken into consideration in estimating the cost of food. In Fall River the operatives lived under city conditions without any supplementary sources of income.

The proportion which the cost of food in Southern households formed of total expenditures varied from 35 to 61 per cent. On reducing the cost to a one man basis it was found that the weekly cost per man ranged from 89 cents to $1.67. Among the households of the mill operatives in Fall River the cost of food constituted from 31 to 55 per cent. of total expenditures. The weekly per man cost of food varied from $1.20 to $2.35, a considerable higher range, as can be readily seen, than obtained in the South.

The Clothing They Wear.

Some idea of the quality and character of the clothing worn by the cotton-mill workers can be gained from a knowledge of the different articles bought and the prices paid.

The fathers, for instance, usually paid $10 for a suit of clothes, $2 to $3 per pair for shoes, $1 to $2 for a hat, and almost universally 10 cents a pair for socks. The boys fifteen years old pay about $6 for suits, $1.50 to $2.50 per pair for shoes, 25 cents to $1 for caps and hats, and 10 cents per pair for stockings. The younger boys' suits cost from $2.50 to $3.50, their shoes from $1.50 to $2, caps and hats from 25 cents to $1, and stockings 10 cents per pair. The average amount annually spent by the fathers on their clothing was $38.97.

Gingham, calico, lawn and percale are the principal materials from which the dresses of the women and girls are made. Yet, in most instances, there was a suit either purchased ready-made or made by a dressmaker.

The mothers as a rule spent less for their clothing than did the older daughters. In some instances the amount spent by them for clothing was wholly inadequate. In these cases their clothing was either supplemented by that left over from former years or by the castoff clothing of the daughters. The largest amount paid by any mother for clothing was $33.75. The annual average was $14.92.

As to Amusements.

The amusements and recreation of the cotton-mill employes in the South are very simple. They visit among themselves and attend their own churches and Sunday schools. In some communities they have church buildings and regularly installed pastors. In others, the preacher comes to them at intervals. At the country mill studied, they have preaching about once in four weeks in a schoolhouse that is some distance away.

Where the mills are located in or near a town or city, the employes go to the moving-picture shows and the theatre occasionally, sometimes for street car rides; and sometimes to the park. On an average about 2 per cent. of the total expenditures is for amusement and recreation.

In New England the outlay for amusement is largely affected by racial characteristics. The Irish, French-Canadians and Portuguese have larger expenditure for this item than the other races.

Some Conclusions.

The history of the cotton industry in Fall River is the same as that in other New England towns. In the beginning the employes were all Americans. These were replaced by the English and Irish immigrants. The English and Irish have been, in a large measure, replaced by the French-Canadians, and now the French-Canadians are being replaced by the Italians, Poles and Portuguese. In each case the story has been the same. The newcomers at first filling the positions demanding unskilled labor, gradually work their way into the more skilled positions until they dominate the whole industry. Each succeeding race has come in with a standard of living lower than the prevailing one.

In the South, the cotton-mill people are of too recent origin to permit the forming of any conclusions. It is unquestionably true that their condition has been greatly improved by their migration from remote and isolated mountain and agricultural sections to the villages and towns. As a class they are still more or less isolated, but contact with their new environment is bound to bring higher and diversified wants and better standards.

GOOD ROADS FOR KANAWHA.

West Virginia Folks Waking Up to Realization of a Patent Fact.

Charleston, W. Va., March 9.—While the great oil strike at Blue Creek, only fourteen miles away from Charleston, has caused a great deal of excitement here, and it is hard at times to get people to think or talk about anything but oil, still the business men of the city are giving considerable attention just now to one other very important matter, and that is, a plan by which a system of good roads may be obtained for the county of Kanawha. The subject is one which has been widely and voluminously discussed here as elsewhere, but which has not so far gone much beyond the discussion stage.

However, the wholesale merchants of this city are beginning to realize the importance of good roads close to home, and it looks as if this subject is going to engross the attention of the Chamber of Commerce to the exclusion of other matters this spring.

FARMERS WHO BUY; THOSE WHO DON'T

It Pays to Raise Hay for Home Consumption—Some Facts and Figures.

BY J. M. BELL.

The prevailing high prices of hay and grain, in fact for all kinds of feed for beasts, must necessarily prove to be sharp reminders to those farmers who are so unfortunate as to have to put their hands down in their pockets, as the saying is, and pay out money for horse and mule feed.

There is an old saying among farmers to the effect that "bought feed goes fast," which means, that when a farmer has to go to his more fortunate neighbor to buy feed, gets it home and commences to use it, that the teams seem to eat double the quantity that they would consume if the feed had been raised at home. There is more truth than fiction in this. In the first place, before the farmer really makes up his mind to give his hard-earned money for his neighbor's forage or grain, he has most probably economized with th elittle that he has left in his own barn, until the appetites of his horses and mules have been whetted to the highest pitch, at the same time the light rations which they have been getting, have begun to tell on their appearance, and work, for animals that do regular farm labor, soon "go back" when their owners cut their rations down.

Now comes the wagonload of hay from the neighbor's barn, this at present prices will cost a least $25 per ton, and a hungry work horse or mule will eat fifteen pounds of it per diem without the least tear of his being gorged. If this hay has to be hauled any distance, it cost the buyer about $27.50 per ton. Naurally, the teamsters, who have had to "feed light" on this farm, will now wake up by giving their charges all of the bought hay that they will eat, so the expensive forage will soon disappear, and more will have to be bought, at the same high price.

Now we come to the question of bought corn. The writer understands that in many sections of the State, "King Corn" at the present time is worth $4 per barrel, or 80 cents per busnel, and that at the barn door. (I know of farmers who are getting more). A work horse or mule will manage to eat at least $o worth of this bought corn every month, nor will he be foundered or suffer any injury whatever.

From the above figures it can be readily seen that the farmers who are buying feed in the year 1912 will be up against it. I have given the most conservative estimates regarding the great expense attached to the purchasing of feed even from your neighbors. When it comes to getting your supplies of grain and hay from the city markets, the expense must naturally be heavier, as you have to take in the important items of freight from the city to your railway station or wharf, and then you have to haul the stuff to your farm over roads that, at this season, are not of the turnpike class.

The backbone of a Virginia winter is practically broken, and in a few days it will be possible to put in forage crops, which will help to keep down the feed bill of those who are now so unlucky as to have to buy, but this will not mean a supply of grain, for that must be bought by those who do not have it in their barns until they thresh out their oat crops, and that means somewhere about the first of July. So the farmers who have not a plentiful supply of grain on hand will have to buy for several months yet.

Early Forage Crops.

Our leading Southern agricultural journal, The Southern Planter, in its February number, gives some good advice to its readers anent the question of putting in forage crops which will mature in the early summer season. For instance, there are Canada field peas, sown with oats. This mixture, according to the Planter, will give the farmer good horse and mule forage. Oats alone, sown this month or early in March, and cut when the grain is in the doughy state, will make pretty fair hay. A patch of either of these crops will go a long ways to help the farmer out in his difficulty.

It is possible that feed will be even higher than it is at present, but the sowing of forage crops by our Virginia farmers, and that as soon as they can get them in the ground, will at least help those who are out of hay to curtail the heavy expense of feeding the work teams, as stuff raised on the farm is never so high in price—that is, to the consumer—as that which one has to buy. Our Virginia lands are fertile, and in every portion of the State fine hay can be raised. Naturally there are some sections better adapted to the raising of heavy crops of it than others, but there is probably not a county in the old Commonwealth where more hay could not be raised than there now is, and surely this year should prove one of warning to our farmers, who will have to buy what they could in all probability raise at home.

MILTON MOVES; TOWN GETS BUSY

Good North Carolina Town With Ample Facilities Proposes to Get in Limelight.

Milton, N. C., March 8.—The good old town of Milton has waked up and is making, and proposes to continue to make, strenuous efforts to get in the ranks of the progressive towns of North Carolina and the South. Last week the business men of Milton united themselves into an organization for the purpose of improving and enlarging the town, by advertising its natural advantages, by inviting capitalists to come and investigate and encouraging same to locate and invest, by welcoming the country people, and soliciting their trade, and by getting a movement on foot among the present population to improve the general appearance of the town, so that visitors may be favorably impressed. Nineteen of the business men of Milton joined hands in this movement for growth and improvment, and these men are determined that no rock shall be left in the way that would tend to lessen in any way the growth of the town, or debar or discourage immigration.

After electing a temporary chairman, the meeting was called to order and the following officers were elected: G. W. Reed, president; L. J. Whitlock, vice-president; I. P. Davis, secretary and treasurer.

It was decided that the name of the organization should be "The Business Men's Association of Milton, N. C." There was a live round-table discussion of the means and opportunities for growth of the town. It was moved and passed that all the leading newspapers of North Carolina and Virginia be sent an article stating the objects and purposes of the organization and giving location and advantages of Milton as a place for investment. Every one present seemed to be in earnest, and we believe that with these nineteen men shoulder to shoulder working for the upbuild, Milton will be able soon to take her place alongside of the growing towns of the State.

Milton is situated on the Atlantic and Danville division of the Southern railroad, on the border of Virginia, twelve miles from Danville, twenty-five miles from South Boston and forty-eight miles from Greensboro. It is surrounded by a country rich in soil, and is well laid off, having once been a town of wealth and prosperity, and can, with some work, be made attractive and inviting. Being situated on the Dan River, it has within easy reach an enormous amount of waterpower that could be utilized for the benefit of the town.

NEW CAROLINA RAILWAY.

Salisbury and Monroe Railway to Make Another Link in Carolina Railway System.

Raleigh, N. C., March 9.—Work on the Salisbury and Monroe Railway is to begin within a fortnight. The road is to be almost precisely an air line, and will pass through about half of Rowan county, through all Cabarrus and the northern half of Union county. It will traverse a section rich in agricultural products, hardwoods and minerals. Its president is N. B. McCanless, of Salisbury, who says that all the financial arrangements have been completed, the survey has been made and the engineers are now setting stakes for construction. At Monroe the road will make a union with the Seaboard Air Line, and at Salisbury with the Southern. It will be about sixty miles long.

APPLE CRAZE CONTINUES.

Orchard Lands in Shenandoah Valley Bring Big Prices.

Berryville, Va., March 9.—What is popularly known in this section of the Shenandoah Valley as the "apple craze" continues unabated. At the present rate of setting out apple orchards, in a short time there will be very little acreage left for ordinary farming. Lands are rising in value—the Baldwin farm, about four miles from Berryville, containing about 200 acres, selling this week for $22,000, an increase of about $8,000 over the price paid for it a few years ago. Ice plants are increasing the capacity of their storage rooms to take care of the increasing yield of fruit. Real estate men predict that within ten years good apple lands will reach the price of $500 per acre.

THE WORD OBEY.

As an Industrial Proposition It Is Likely to Work Both Ways.

There has been a "straw vote" taken of fourteen of the most prominent women in the country on whether or not to omit the word "obey" from the marriage ceremony. Of the fourteen votes, all but four say drop it. The four are Mary Stewart Cutting, Margaret Wilson, Amelia Barr and Lilian Whiting. Among the ten who say "drop it" are Jeannette L. Gilder, Marion Harland, Harriet P. Spoffard, Alice T. Bartram, Caroline B. King, Kathleen Norris, Fanny H. Carpenter, Christine Terhune Herrick.

One woman, Alice Hubbard, of East Aurora, says that the word "obey" should be required of both sides in the marriage ceremony. The husband should be required to obey, too. This gentle reciprocity of submission should be the solution of the whole matter. As a practical fact, there are more things in which the husband should obey the wife than where the wife should obey the husband. In actual experience that word "obey" is a joke. The idea that with a loving couple there should be any controversy as to who should obey, is unnatural and absurd.

And beside, there are men who are worth being obeyed, and women, likewise, and this matter should adjust itself on lines of worth, merit and good judgment. If love rules a home, the question of right doesn't bother it.—Ohio State Journal.

TOBACCO SALES ALL OVER VIRGINIA

(Continued from First Page.)

be less in demand, and are comparatively reasonable.

There appears to be little or no tobacco being bought for speculation, notwithstanding the fact that the dealers carry smaller stocks than usual. The greater part of present offerings seem to be taken direct for manufacturers' account, mainly for domestic consumption. Dealers' stocks of redried tobaccos are much smaller than usual at this season of the year. Trade in redried tobacco is quiet.

Petersburg Tobacco Market.

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]

Petersburg, Va., March 9.—Sales of tobacco this week, 419,000 pounds, bring the sales for the season to date up to 4,250,195 pounds. The market continues active with good prices realized. Most of the tobacco received during the past few days was in hogsheads by rail, the roads being in such condition that teams cannot well be driven. Quotations:

Common lugs	$ 6.50 @ $ 7.00
Good lugs	8.00 @ 9.00
Short leaf	7.50 @ 9.00
Medium shipping leaf	10.00 @ 11.50
Good shipping leaf	12.00 @ 14.00
Short wrappers	11.00 @ 15.00
Good wrappers	15.00 @ 20.00

No fine wrappers offering.

Lynchburg Tobacco Market.

Lynchburg, Va., March 9.—John D. Oglesby, of the Lynchburg Tobacco Warehouse Company (Inc.), makes the following report of leaf tobacco sold on the Lynchburg market:

Sold week ending March 8, 836,500 pounds; sold week ending March 1, 781,900 pounds; increase this week 44,600 pounds.

Sold from September 1, 1911, to March 8, 1912, 12,836,500 pounds; sold from September 1, 1910, to March 10, 1911, 12,007,900 pounds; increase for 1912, 779,600 pounds.

After the heavy snowstorm receipts came fully up to expectations, and again a very large percentage of the offerings consisted of inferior grades, much of it being wet and out of order. There was not as much animation shown as usual, the result being that nearly all grades were slightly lower, though the greatest kick made by the farmers was on the price of good leaf. Week's quotations:

Lugs, common (damaged)	$ 3.75 @ $ 4.75
Lugs, common (sound)	5.00 @ 6.00
Lugs, medium	6.00 @ 6.75
Lugs, good	7.00 @ 7.75
Leaf, common	6.00 @ 7.75
Leaf, medium	8.00 @ 9.00
Leaf, good	9.25 @ 11.00
Leaf, fine	11.00 @ 13.50
Leaf, wrappers	14.00 @ 25.00

South Boston Tobacco Market.

South Boston, Va., March 9.—T. B. Johnson, president of the South Boston Tobacco Association, has submitted the following report, showing the amount of leaf tobacco sold by the South Boston warehouses for the month of February, 1912, with comparisons to date:

Sold February, 1912, 2,705,345 pounds at $357,191.81; average, $13.20; sold February, 1911, 3,561,127 pounds at $382,177.98; average, $10.73; showing decrease for same month last year of 855,782 pounds at $24,992.15, but an increase in average for the month of $2.47 per 100 pounds.

Sales first seven months ending February 28, 1912, 15,502,858 pounds at $1,834,943.78; average, $11.59; sales first seven months ending February 28, 1911, 16,060,651 pounds at $1,-858,201.45; average $10.36; showing decrease of 67,793 pounds and increase of $176,742.33, with an increased average of $1.14 per 100 pounds.

Farmville Tobacco Market.

Farmville, Va., March 9.—Prices paid for tobacco during the week have been a shade better than the week previous. Common grades continue at satisfactory figures, while the better classes are selling low. Breaks for the week have been about as usual at this time of the year. A few years ago Saturday sales were abandoned on the Farmville market, and there is talk of resuming them when the next season opens.